



LEROY D. BACA, SHERIFF

County of Los Angeles
Sheriff's Department Headquarters
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July 25, 2008

The Honorable Board of Supervisors
County of Los Angeles
383 Kenneth Hahn Hall of Administration
Los Angeles, California 90012

Dear Members of the Grand Jury:

**RESPONSE TO THE FINAL REPORT OF THE 2007-2008
LOS ANGELES COUNTY GRAND JURY**

Attached is the Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department's (Department) response to the 2007-08 Grand Jury Report's recommendations (Attachment A). The Grand Jury areas of interest specific to the Department include; jail inmate personal accounts, the Hertzberg-Davis Forensic Science Center, emergency preparedness, speakers and events sub-committee, and jails/detention facilities.

Should you have questions regarding our response, please contact Division Director Victor Rampulla at (323) 526-5357.

Sincerely,

LEROY D. BACA
SHERIFF

A Tradition of Service

RESPONSE TO THE GRAND JURY FINAL REPORT

COUNTY OF LOS ANGELES – SHERIFF'S DEPARTMENT

SUBJECT: 2007-2008 GRAND JURY RECOMMENDATIONS FOR
JAIL INMATE PERSONAL ACCOUNTS

RECOMMENDATION NO. 1

The Los Angeles County Civil Grand Jury recommends the Sheriff should impose a limit of \$500 on the total amount of money an inmate has in his or her account at any given time. If the inmate is booked into custody with a sum greater than \$500 in his or her possession, the inmate should be required to draw down on the amount until it falls below \$500 before any deposits from outside third parties are accepted.

RESPONSE

We believe the need for an established cap is necessary. The cap, currently set at \$900, was established in response to earlier concerns about inmate accounts and the criminal monies that follow them. A formula was derived from the maximum amount an inmate may spend on commissary purchases for a week and the average length of incarceration for an inmate in the County jail system. The Department believes the current amount of \$900 is an appropriate limitation and will refrain from imposing any additional changes at this time. Lowering the cap amount would also place a burden on family members and increase visitation volume at station and jail facilities.

RECOMMENDATION NO. 2

The Los Angeles County Civil Grand Jury recommends that the Sheriff should discontinue and prohibit the practice of allowing an inmate to authorize the release of funds to outside third parties, except for money that was in the inmate's possession at the time of booking. All money deposited by outside third parties to inmate accounts should only be for use by inmates in purchasing phone cards and items from the jail store.

RESPONSE

We are currently consulting with County Counsel regarding prohibiting third party transfers of inmate funds. Barring any legal restrictions, the Department will consider the possibility of prohibiting third party transfers. The only exception would be for money that was in the inmate's possession at the time of booking.

RECOMMENDATION NO. 3

The Los Angeles County Civil Grand Jury recommends that the Sheriff should implement procedures requiring cashier staff to request valid identification from outside third parties making deposits to an inmate's account, unless the amount is less than a pre-determined nominal sum, such as \$100.

RESPONSE

We concur with the recommendation made by the Los Angeles County Grand Jury and will take steps to modify existing procedures.

RESPONSE TO THE GRAND JURY FINAL REPORT

COUNTY OF LOS ANGELES – SHERIFF'S DEPARTMENT

SUBJECT: 2007-2008 GRAND JURY RECOMMENDATIONS FOR
HERTZBERG-DAVIS FORENSIC SCIENCE CENTER

RECOMMENDATION NO. 4

The Joint Powers Authority of the Hertzberg-Davis Forensic Science Center should review why there are no floor drains beneath the decontamination showers located in the hallways of the new crime laboratory [sic] This may allow run-off to travel into the various rooms of the building under the doors, some of which do not have adequate thresholds or weather-stripping at their base [sic] The governing authority should direct that appropriate refitting, if any, be done to redirect, capture and dispose of the runoff.

RESPONSE

During the design phase of the Hertzberg-Davis Forensic Science Center, the subject of floor drain location was discussed with the project team, including the architect/engineer Harley Ellis Devereaux. It was acknowledged that floor drains would not be provided at emergency shower and eyewash locations due to the following:

- (1) The floor drains would rarely, if ever, be used and thus would dry out and allow odors to be introduced to the area. As such, regular maintenance would be required to prevent this situation.
- (2) The floor drains would increase the possibility of chemicals, or other potentially hazardous materials used in the lab, to enter the waste system. Associated environmental impacts would be difficult to predict.

Therefore, it was agreed that in the unlikely event of an emergency shower/eyewash discharge, maintenance personnel would be dispatched to the concerned area.

RECOMMENDATION NO. 5

The Joint Powers Authority of the Hertzberg-Davis Forensic Science Center should review why there are light leaks in the vehicle inspection areas that lessen the effectiveness of alternative light sources, the use of which is often necessary to discover evidence that is difficult to detect under traditional light sources. Appropriate refitting, if any, be should be done to eliminate the light leaks.

RESPONSE

Ambient light enters each vehicle inspection area through the window in the interior hallway door and under the exit door to the outside. A window blind would eliminate the light coming through the hallway door window and a door sweep would eliminate the outside light from coming under the exit door. Currently, a larger window in each room has a double set of window blinds, which adequately darkens the environment. Therefore, the rooms are useable and do provide acceptable darkness for the processing of vehicles.

RECOMMENDATION NO. 6

The Los Angeles Sheriff's Department and the Los Angeles Police Department should hire additional interns from the California State University Los Angeles Department of Criminalistics, or other students in this same specialization at other universities.

RESPONSE

For the past 10 to 15 years, the Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department's Crime Laboratory has had 3 paid Student Professional Worker (SPW) positions. Students filling these positions are typically undergraduate or graduate students from a variety of local colleges and universities pursuing careers in forensic science. These individuals function as interns and perform a variety of tasks, including analytical method validation, general laboratory support work, and grant research.

The Department's Crime Laboratory also utilizes civilian volunteers, almost entirely students preparing for careers in forensic science, in the same capacity. Presently, the laboratory has 9 volunteers assigned to various disciplines. A few of these are students fulfilling graduation requirements from forensic science programs at accredited universities to complete a specified internship working at a crime lab. The civilian volunteers/interns donate a minimum of 20 hours per month, and some have volunteered their time and talents for more than one year.

Additionally, the Department's Crime Laboratory has been working with the County's Department of Human Resources (DHR) to establish internship positions at the laboratory through the Community-Based Enterprise Education Program (C-BEEP). The laboratory anticipates utilizing interns through the C-BEEP program as early as fall 2008. Currently, provisions for 10 internship positions for the Crime Laboratory are proposed to be funded through C-BEEP.

RECOMMENDATION NO. 7

It is recommended that the Los Angeles Police Department and the Los Angeles Sheriff's Department should accelerate the analysis of stored deoxyribonucleic acid (DNA) samples in rape cases where the assailant is unknown to the victim.

RESPONSE

The Department's Crime Laboratory Forensic Biology Section currently has a case prioritization system in place wherein all sexual assault and homicide cases are worked before other less serious offenses. All sexual assault cases with a request for DNA analysis are worked, and the current turnaround time is less than 90 days from the request date for delivery of the analysis results. Steps are now being taken to further reduce the turnaround time and to expand the analysis to all crimes. Twenty-two additional criminalist positions were requested to occupy the vacant expanded quarters in the DNA section and 6 were approved.

All DNA profiles for assailants, whether the assailants are known or unknown to the victim, are entered into and searched within the database. Based on the reasonable and shrinking turnaround time, we see no need to subdivide sexual assault cases into a suspect and no-suspect prioritization system.

RESPONSE TO THE GRAND JURY FINAL REPORT

COUNTY OF LOS ANGELES – SHERIFF'S DEPARTMENT

SUBJECT: 2007-2008 GRAND JURY RECOMMENDATIONS FOR
EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS

RECOMMENDATION NO. 1

The public safety agencies of all cities within the County of Los Angeles are encouraged to join LARTCS. It requires only a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU); there is no cost to join. The MOU is available from the Los Angeles County Sheriff's Communications Center, (323) 267-2501.

RESPONSE

The Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department agrees with the recommendation, and is in the process of securing MOU agreements. The LARTCS MOU was recently updated to include the citation of specific FCC regulations, which pertain to radio interoperability. The new MOU has been sent out to all signatories for their approval. A large majority of public safety agencies in Los Angeles County are signatories to LARTCS, and new applications are accepted on a monthly basis.

RESPONSE TO THE GRAND JURY FINAL REPORT

COUNTY OF LOS ANGELES – SHERIFF'S DEPARTMENT

SUBJECT: 2007-2008 GRAND JURY RECOMMENDATIONS FOR
SPEAKERS AND EVENTS TRANSPORTATION SUB-COMMITTEE

RECOMMENDATION NO. 1

The Los Angeles County Civil Grand Jury recommends that the Sheriff's Department should consistently provide clean, comfortable buses for transport of the Grand Jury. If appropriate vehicles are not available on a particular day due to logistical problems or other circumstances, the Grand Jury should be notified at least 24 hours in advance, so field trips can be rescheduled

RESPONSE

During Fiscal Year 2007-08, the Department's Transportation Bureau provided buses to transport the Civil Grand Jury to various locales on 13 occasions. On two instances, the bus which had been designated for transportation was changed at the last minute due to either mechanical defects, or inmate transportation demands. The replacement buses did not meet the Civil Grand Jury's requirements. The Sheriff's Department will make every effort to insure that appropriate transportation is provided, or shall give the Civil Grand Jury sufficient notice in order to reschedule.

RESPONSE TO THE GRAND JURY FINAL REPORT

COUNTY OF LOS ANGELES – SHERIFF'S DEPARTMENT

SUBJECT: 2007-2008 GRAND JURY RECOMMENDATIONS FOR
JAILS/DETENTION FACILITIES

RECOMMENDATION NO. 1

The Los Angeles County Civil Grand Jury recommends the Sheriff's Department should utilize non-sworn personnel to perform clerical and routine duties.

RESPONSE

Whenever possible, the Department uses non-sworn personnel to perform clerical and routine duties; however, there are times when positions require a specific skill, or investigative experience, which would cause the position to be filled by a sworn member of the Department. Additionally, there are times when clerical positions are filled by a sworn member on light duty work status, and/or, under administrative investigation.

RECOMMENDATION NO. 2

The Los Angeles County Civil Grand Jury recommends that Crescenta Valley LASD, Glendale Courthouse, Lakewood LASD, Lennox LASD need to construct secure facilities to transport inmates to or from buses to holding areas in order to protect staff, inmates, and the public.

RESPONSE

The construction of secure inmate transfer facilities would be beneficial. However, during this time of fiscal constraint, the Department does not recommend that the construction of secure facilities would be an appropriate use of County funds. In regards to Lakewood, Lennox, and Crescenta Valley Sheriff's Stations, during the transportation of inmates, adequate uniformed personnel are utilized to protect staff, inmates, and the public. As for Lennox Sheriff's Station, the current construction of a new facility is underway and will alleviate this concern. If construction funds become available in future budgets, the Department will consider the recommended changes to the existing facilities. Additionally, with regards to the Glendale Courthouse, there is a video-arraignment program beginning with the Glendale Police Department. This program will drastically reduce the inmate population at the Glendale Courthouse and will reduce the usage of the current bus bay.

RECOMMENDATION NO. 3

The Los Angeles County Civil Grand Jury recommends that all LASD detention facilities should be well lit.

RESPONSE

The lighting within all our detention facilities is very important and many repairs have been made to improve lighting conditions. Recently, the Department worked on replacing burned out light bulbs and fixing or replacing broken lighting fixtures. Additionally, the Department has contracted with an outside vendor, Ikon Powder Coating Inc., to remove the old, painted over, security screening, which covers the lights within the facilities. The company sandblasts and powder coats the security screening, in an effort to restore the screening to its natural state. Doing maintenance such as this has greatly increased the lighting within our custody facilities.

RECOMMENDATION NO. 4

The Los Angeles County Civil Grand Jury recommends that Pasadena and Glendale Courthouses with LASD holding facilities need earthquake repair and retrofitting.

RESPONSE

Pasadena Courthouse:

Upon implementation of the Trial Court Facilities Act of 2002, the responsibility for maintaining superior court buildings was taken from individual counties and delegated to the State of California. This transition, which began to take effect in 2004, is a gradual process which is currently underway. All individual repairs and/or retrofitting will be addressed pending the completion of the transference of each courthouse.

Glendale Courthouse:

The courthouse underwent earthquake repair and retrofitting approximately 15 years ago. All visible damage was repaired at that time. Currently, the only visible damage is a 6-inch long paint crack in the attorney interview room. This crack does not appear to be earthquake related damage. The Department is unaware of any remaining damage or retrofitting that is required.

RECOMMENDATION NO. 5

The Los Angeles County Civil Grand Jury recommends that LASD and LAPD policy and procedures manuals need to be kept in a central location and reviewed annually and updated as necessary. These manuals should be available to the public on demand.

RESPONSE

The Department provides an on-line edition of the Manual of Policy and Procedures for all Department members. Doing so allows employees access to the Manuals. In addition, at least one hard copy of the Manual of Policy and Procedures is available at each unit of assignment for immediate access. The Department regularly reviews and updates the Manual of Policy and Procedures and issues e-mail announcements each time there are revisions. Access to our Department's Manual of Policy and Procedures is available to members of the public at any time. These requests are handled through a formal public records request pursuant to the California Public Records Act.

RECOMMENDATION NO. 6

The Los Angeles County Civil Grand Jury recommends that the number of deputies at the Compton Courthouse be increased and that an additional high security floor be added. Escorting inmates from detention to courtroom lock-ups with too few escorts endangers the safety of the public, court employees, and sheriff's deputies.

RESPONSE

The number of judicial proceedings for incarcerated individuals at the Compton Courthouse has risen steadily during the past several years. The number of cases involving violent crimes and crimes associated with street gangs has also risen dramatically during the same time period. The number of sworn personnel assigned to Compton Courthouse was reduced in accordance with contract reductions required by the California Superior Court. The ratio of inmates-to-deputy personnel assigned to the lockup is currently under review. As for the recommendation to add an additional high-security floor, this concept was recently approved for equipment upgrades by the Superior Court; however funding for three additional permanent deputy personnel was not secured at this time. There are still ongoing discussions between LASD and the Los Angeles Superior Court to gain funding for the three deputies.

RECOMMENDATION NO. 7

The Los Angeles County Civil Grand Jury recommends that boxed/dry and refrigerated foods in LASD jails and detention facilities must observe First In First Out (FIFO) rotation of products. Food containers must be labeled to indicate contents and expiration date. All food products must be disposed of by the expiration date.

RESPONSE

The Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department agrees with this recommendation and currently utilizes FIFO procedures. As a Los Angeles County Health Department provider, the LASD Food Services Unit conducts Food Safety Managers' Certification Classes on a regular basis, wherein cooks and jailers are trained to comply with the California Retail Food Code (July 1, 2007). All boxed/dry and refrigerated foods are issued a "use by" or expiration date. Products must be labeled properly to practice FIFO protocols. Assembled sack breakfasts and sack lunches, provided by the Department's Food Services Unit, are sealed with color coded tape indicating the serving date. All pre-portioned meals prepared for sheriff's stations have a label which complies with Section 114089.1 of the California Retail Food Code. All expired products are disposed of on or before the expiration date. Food handlers are required to take holding temperatures every shift to ensure safe food storage temperatures.

RECOMMENDATION NO. 8

The Los Angeles County Civil Grand Jury recommends that all medication in LASD jails and detention facilities must be adequately secured and dispensed only by licensed personnel or trained non-licensed personnel. Inmates receiving medication should be properly identified by wristbands.

RESPONSE

Medical Services Bureau's Policy 318-1, Administration of Prescribed Medications, is currently under review and being updated. The new policy, 318, Medication Administration, reflects that only licensed staff will administer medications to inmate/patients. Further, licensed staff will identify the patient by asking the inmate/patient their name, the last three digits of their booking number, and will visually check the patient's identification band. Currently, during the administration of medication, the pill carts are continually attended and are in sight of the nurse at all times. Medication carts are locked and secured when not in use.